

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Amendment is accompanied by a Request for a One-Month Extension of Time, and by payment of the one-month extension fee for a large entity.

This Amendment is also accompanied by a Request for Entry of Replacement Drawing to correct Fig. 3 of the patent drawings. Within Paragraph 3 of the final Office Action, the Examiner objected to the drawings as failing to show “an electrically conductive surface (7) on the inner surface of the first Al₂O₃ housing plate”. In fact, this feature is shown in Fig. 3 of the patent drawings, though it was not originally labeled. Applicant’s original specification states, at page 10, lines 10-12, that “the membrane (2) and the housing (1) are each coated with an electrically conductive film (7).” The film (7) was illustrated and labeled on the upper surface of membrane (2) in Fig. 3. The film was also illustrated, but was not labeled, on the lower surface of housing (1) in Fig. 3. The replacement sheet submitted concurrently herewith adds a lead line, and the reference numeral “7”, to Fig. 3 to label the film (7) shown on the lower surface of housing (1) in Fig. 3.

Claims 40-43 have been canceled above, without prejudice, as a result of the Examiner’s decision to withdraw such claims from further consideration. Applicant reserves the right to present the subject matter that was recited in such claims within a continuing application.

Within Paragraph 4 of the final Office Action, the Examiner objected to the specification as failing to disclose the step of “sealing a connecting port (5) about the opening in the second Al₂O₃ housing plate”. In this regard, claim 32 has been amended above to recite the step of “providing a connecting port (5) about the opening in the second Al₂O₃ housing plate”. Applicants’ specification clearly supports this amended language, and Applicants’ submit that the Examiner’s objection to the specification is now obviated.

In Paragraph 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner noted certain objections to claims 34, 37 and 38. The Examiner's suggestions for amending the language in such claims has been adopted by amendment above, and Applicants believe that the grounds for such objections no longer exist.

In Paragraph 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner entered a rejection of claim 39 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, due to the appearance of the phrase "heating the Al₂O₃ membrane and the first and second Al₂O₃ housing plates to a temperature above 330 degrees Centigrade". The number "330" was a typographical error, and should have been "300". This typographical error has been corrected in the listing of claim 39 above. While Applicants' specification does not expressly recite the use of a temperature above "300 degrees Centigrade", Applicants' specification does expressly state that "the glass seals are baked at several 100°C. ...". Those skilled in the art, and indeed, even those not skilled in the art, understand the word "several" to mean "more than two but fewer than many". Thus, those skilled in the art would understand the phrase "the glass seals are baked at several 100°C. ..." to mean that the glass seals are heated to a temperature above 300 degrees Centigrade. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that their patent application specification adequately supports the recited limitation in claim 39 of "heating the Al₂O₃ membrane and the first and second Al₂O₃ housing plates to a temperature above 300 degrees Centigrade to sealingly join the outer periphery of the Al₂O₃ membrane to the outer peripheries of the first Al₂O₃ housing plate and the second Al₂O₃ housing plate."

Within the final Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claim 33 would be considered allowable if rewritten in independent form. The features recited by claim 33 have been incorporated into claim 32 by amendment above. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 32,

and claims 26, 34-36, 39, and 44-49 dependent therefrom, should now be considered to be allowable.

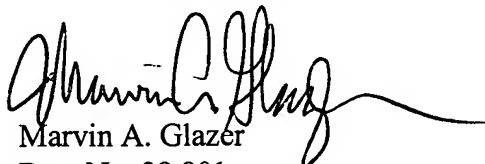
Likewise, within the final Office Action, the Examiner indicated that claim 37 (which formerly depended from claim 32) would be considered allowable if rewritten in independent form. The features recited by former claim 32 have been incorporated into claim 37 by amendment above. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 37, and dependent claim 38, should now be considered to be allowable.

Because the claims are now in allowable form, Applicants need not comment upon the Examiner's new "prior art" arguments based upon newly-cited U.S. Patent No. 6,049,158 (Takeuchi).

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the present application is now believed to be in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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